



Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 21 February 2006

Current
Nationwide
Threat Level is

ELEVATED
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF
TERRORIST ATTACKS

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Daily Highlights

- The Associated Press reports Pelican Bay State Prison inmates gained access to personal information about prison employees, including their Social Security numbers, after the state of California unlawfully allowed them to work in a warehouse storing the data. (See item [10](#))
- The Concord Monitor reports New Hampshire officials have discovered that an unidentified hacker breached a state computer server and installed a program capable of observing credit card numbers used in transactions with the state. (See item [13](#))
- The Associated Press reports researchers say that intensified development in flood-prone parts of Missouri and California significantly raises the risk of New Orleans-style flooding in urban areas on the Mississippi and Sacramento rivers. (See item [53](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report *Fast Jump*

Production Industries: [Energy](#); [Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

Service Industries: [Banking and Finance](#); [Transportation and Border Security](#); [Postal and Shipping](#)

Sustenance and Health: [Agriculture](#); [Food](#); [Water](#); [Public Health](#)

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *February 20, Reuters* — **Nigerian militants strike oil targets again.** Nigerian militants said they blew up a military houseboat and an oil pipeline on Monday, February 20, extending a campaign of sabotage in the world's eighth largest exporter which has already cut supplies by a fifth. The militants, who are holding nine foreign hostages threatened an even more devastating

series of attacks on the whole region. Shell said it had suspended 455,000 barrels a day of oil production, 19 percent of its output, after pre-dawn raids on installations in Delta state on Saturday, February 18. Shell closed 340,000 barrels a day of production from fields feeding its Forcados tanker platform, which was bombed on Saturday, and halted another 115,000 barrels daily by closing the offshore field as a precaution. North Sea Brent crude oil futures rose \$1.51 to \$61.40 a barrel on Monday in response to the attacks. The militants snatched the hostages — including three Americans — from a barge operated by U.S. services company Willbros. Analysts at Eurasia Group said "The security situation in the Niger Delta will remain largely unstable for the rest of the year, with intermittent attacks, regularly disrupting about 10 to 20 percent of Nigerian crude production."

Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/20/AR2006022000362_pf.html

2. *February 20, Associated Press* — **Emergency declared at nuclear power plant.** An emergency was declared at a nuclear power plant about 55 miles southwest of Chicago early Monday, February 20, when operators could not confirm the position of three control rods after the reactor shut down. There were no injuries, no radiological releases, and no equipment damage at the LaSalle Generating Station in Brookfield, IL, according to Exelon Nuclear officials. The plant was scheduled to shut down earlier for a refueling outage. According to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), the reactor did not shut down properly. Company officials said three of the 185 control rods failed to insert fully into the reactor core and operators declared a "site area emergency," the second-highest of the four emergency categories in the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) emergency response system. The emergency was over about four hours later, Exelon Nuclear officials said. Operators reset the control rod position indication system and then found only one rod was out of position, company officials said. Exelon Nuclear officials, IEMA, and the NRC are trying to determine why the control rod indicators originally showed the rods weren't inserted properly. Preliminary information showed a malfunction of the plant's turbine control system caused the automatic reactor shutdown.

Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/custom/newsroom/chi-060220nuclear.1,2917200.story?track=rss>

3. *February 19, Associated Press* — **Tens of thousands lack power in Northeast.** A deep freeze stretched from the Rockies to New England on Sunday, February 19 as workers tried to restore power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses left dark by fierce wind that also was blamed for four deaths. Utilities reported at least 56,000 homes and business still without electricity Sunday, down from a peak of 328,000 customers blacked out Friday when wind gusted to 77 mph at Rochester, NY. Thousands of customers also lost power in Michigan, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, where the National Weather Service reported a wind gust of 143 mph on Stratton Mountain. Several states opened shelters, providing havens with light and heat for those without power. "Most people tough it out the first night and then come in the second night," said Mark Bosma, spokesperson for Vermont Emergency Management. Trees toppled by the wind killed two motorists in New York and one in Massachusetts.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060219/ap_on_re_us/winter_storm_s_34

4. *February 19, Bloomberg* — **Venezuela's natural gas is for region, not United States.** Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said his country's natural gas is for the domestic market

and South America, and not the U.S. Venezuela's natural gas reserves, which total about 151 trillion cubic feet and are the eighth-largest in the world, are first and foremost for the domestic market, Chavez said. The South American market, and specifically Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay comes next, he said. "And if we have any gas reserves left, we will send them to the U.S.," said Chavez. Chavez's natural gas decision is also a blow to Chevron Corp., which has discovered seven trillion cubic feet in the off-shore Deltana Platform field, which straddles the South American country's border with Trinidad and Tobago. Chevron, the second-largest U.S. oil company, had planned to develop the field and send liquefied natural gas to the U.S. where prices have been soaring due to rising demand. Rather than supplying the U.S. market, Venezuela will send its natural gas to Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay via a proposed pipeline that would span the continent, Chavez said. Chavez, Argentine President Nestor Kirchner, and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will meet March 12 to receive the first technical reports about the planned pipeline.

Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000086&sid=aGSdFb.D RFF4>

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Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials Sector

5. *February 20, Associated Press* — **Louisiana's chemical industry facing problems.** Katrina's winds and flood waters damaged the chemical plants that dot the lower Mississippi River, while Rita did the same to facilities in southwestern Louisiana. Both storms plowed through the complicated infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico that brings in natural gas, resulting in prices that skyrocketed in October and only have moderated slightly. The chemical industry, which uses natural gas to fuel boilers and as a major component of many products, competes with overseas producers where natural gas is more abundant, less in demand, and much cheaper. Some of those producers also enjoy subsidies from their governments. Because of disruptions of gas supplies in the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana's chemical plants also are paying additional pipeline transport costs to obtain their supplies from other locales. The chemical industry is also facing labor shortages and skyrocketing labor costs. Plants typically use contract electricians, welders, and maintenance workers — all in high demand in areas facing years of hurricane reconstruction.

Source: <http://www.katc.com/Global/story.asp?S=4523309>

6. *February 17, Associated Press* — **Chemical storage facility goes up in flames in Bakersfield.** A raging fire engulfed a chemical storage facility Friday, February 17, but no one was injured, a Kern, CA, fire official said. The blaze at the Hondo Chemical plant burned throughout a 9,600-square-foot building and sent up a towering column of smoke over the remote area several miles from the nearest neighborhoods, said Capt. Benny Wofford. Some 60 firefighters surrounded the flames and set up unmanned nozzles to pour water onto the flames. The fire began when a 250-gallon container of methanol came in contact with an electrical pump. The flames then engulfed stores of methanol and glycerin, Wofford said. Hondo Chemical creates custom blends of soil fertilizers for farms, golf courses and landscapers. Another company, American Biofuels, also operates on another area of the site.

Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/breaking_new_s/13900715.htm

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

7. *February 19, Associated Press* — **U.S. warplane makers see stiff competition.** As China develops its own aircraft, and as a mega-deal for combat aircraft looms in India, a mix of political, financial, and military factors that often shapes major arms deals long after the Cold is becoming apparent. China, a growing rival to the U.S., is off-limits to the U.S. defense industry. India wants 126 combat aircraft for an air force that has traditionally relied on Russian and, to a lesser extent, French and British planes. "India is a very lucrative market for any arms supplier," said Rahul Bedi, an analyst for Jane's Information Group. Some experts say the most sophisticated fighter jets have similar features, and that political influence can play a big role in how governments choose their weapons. Makers of the Gripen fighter jet are casting themselves as a neutral partner for traditional U.S. allies. Gripen views Thailand — a leading importer of U.S. arms that is assessing whether to buy Swedish, American or Russian jets — as a test case of a country's willingness to deal with alternative suppliers. Bedi said India might request additional planes for its navy, and that it could decide to split the order — among America, Russia, or France.

Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/19/AR2006021900458_pf.html

8. *February 15, Agence France-Presse* — **Kyrgyzstan seeks rent rise for U.S. base.** Kyrgyzstan wants the U.S. to pay over 100 times more than it does at present for use of an air base in the ex-Soviet republic, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev said Wednesday, February 15. "According to our new calculations, they should pay \$207 million," Bakiyev said in the interview published by Russia's Kommersant daily. The current rent paid by Washington for use of the Manas base near the Kyrgyz capital "represents a little over \$2 million," Bakiyev said. The new figure has not been arrived at "by accident," he said. "There are international norms for the cost of a hectare of land and a square meter in an international airport of this level." Manas, known by U.S. forces as Ganci, is a staging post for operations in nearby Afghanistan. Its role has expanded since another base used by the United States in neighboring Uzbekistan was closed last November on the orders of the Uzbek government. In addition to its rent payments, the U.S. makes major payments for aircraft fuel.

Source: <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=1536323&C=america>

9. *February 15, George Mason University* — **Monograph: Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S.** With the recent attempts by foreign interests to acquire high-profile U.S. energy and technology assets fresh in the nation's mind, a rich debate is brewing over the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CFIUS) process and the degree to which it is or is not adequately addressing the needs of the U.S. Traditionally, critical infrastructure protection and foreign direct investment have intersected over the issues of companies supplying the Pentagon or companies involved with "dual use" technologies and their impact upon national security. Policymakers responsible for a secure defense industrial base were leery of putting Pentagon supplies in the hands of non-U.S. entities, and providing foreign militaries and third-party purchasers with technology that could be put to a dual use (e.g., in weapons used against the U.S.). Recently however, lawmakers have revisited the suggestion that "national security" needs to be more broadly defined in the context of CFIUS. Some have spoken of restructuring the CFIUS mechanism to more explicitly include issues of economic and energy security along

with the more traditional military procurement and dual use issues. Others feel the structure at present is sufficient. Several differing perspectives present a complete picture of the on-going debate.

Monograph: http://cipp.gmu.edu/archive/CFIUS_monograph.pdf

Source: <http://cipp.gmu.edu/news/story.php?id=110>

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Banking and Finance Sector

10. *February 17, Associated Press* — **Inmates got guards' Social Security numbers.** Inmates gained access to personal information about prison employees, including their Social Security numbers, after the state unlawfully allowed them to work in a warehouse storing the data, a guard union said Thursday, February 16. Inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison also had access to papers containing employees' birth dates and pension account information, as well as prison blueprints, said the California Correctional Peace Officers Association. State and union officials said they didn't know how many prisoners might have gotten hold of the personal information. The inmates' work in the warehouse violated a law barring the Corrections Department from assigning prisoners to jobs giving them access to others' personal information, union president Mike Jimenez said. Corrections department spokesperson Elaine Jennings said, "At this time, very preliminary reports indicate that none of the information got outside of the institution," she said. One prisoner found with confidential records had asked an inmate serving time for identity theft to teach him how to use the information, Jimenez said. Inmates who gained access to the information were the least serious offenders at the prison, the union said. It was unclear how long the inmates had access to the data.

Source: http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/02/17/inmates.data.ap/index.html?section=cnn_latest

11. *February 17, Finextra* — **UK consumer group calls for ID fraud helpdesk services.** The UK's National Consumer Council (NCC) is calling on companies to set up dedicated helpdesks for customers who have fallen victim to identity fraud. The NCC says it wants businesses — especially banks, insurance companies, credit providers, phone, and utility companies — to set up sector wide supports services for victims of ID theft. The group wants companies to set up dedicated ID fraud customer helpdesks where victims would be allocated a named helper to provide practical help, support, and reassurance throughout the time it takes until everything is sorted out. The NCC also wants the government to encourage companies to adopt a minimum standard of service for dealing with ID fraud to make it easier for consumers to prove their identity. Ultimately that could lead to a national ID theft help point where consumers could go to report ID fraud, says the NCC. A U.S. bank-backed Identity Theft Assistance Center was established to help restore financial IDs to nearly 700 victims of identity theft during a one-year pilot.

Source: <http://finextra.com/fullstory.asp?id=14930>

12. *February 17, TechWeb News* — **FBI probes auto-surf site, Ponzi scam alleged.** The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) announced that it has begun an inquiry into 12dailypro.com, a so-called "auto-surfing" marketing company that's been accused of running a Ponzi scam. 12dailypro is one of several "auto-surf" sites on the Web that promise large returns to members who agree to view their ads. More than two weeks ago, its payment processor, StormPay,

suspended payments to 12dailypro members, claiming that the site was an illegal Ponzi scheme. Named for Charles Ponzi, who gained notoriety in the 1920s, a Ponzi scheme is a fraud that promises outrageous investor returns but pays them with money from new investors rather than revenue actually generated by the business. Last weekend, StormPay was hit with a denial-of-service attack that knocked its service offline for two days. Experts believed then that an extortionist made good on a threat and launched the attack after StormPay refused to pay to avoid the assault. For its part, StormPay is under investigation by Tennessee authorities who are conducting an audit of the 30,000 to 35,000 frozen 12dailypro accounts.

Source: <http://www.techweb.com/wire/ebiz/180203986;jsessionid=MUGRFPB2PGECEQSNDBOCKH0CJUMKJVN>

13. *February 16, Concord Monitor (NH)* — **Credit cards at risk; New Hampshire state server hacked.** An unidentified hacker breached a state computer server and installed a program capable of observing credit card numbers used in transactions with the state, New Hampshire officials discovered Wednesday, February 15. The breach involved anyone who used a credit card in a transaction with the Division of Motor Vehicles, the Veterans Home, or the Liquor Commission. Governor John Lynch said that state officials had not learned of any cases of credit card fraud from the hacking. The state Office of Information Technology discovered the presence of a "Trojan horse" application on one of its servers while installing a new program designed to monitor the state computing system, Chief Information Officer Rick Bailey said. The intruding application had the capability to watch transactions as they moved through the hacked server but not to access stored information. The new program installed by the state will automatically search for, identify, and counter security threats. Until the installation of the MARS program, that server had last been checked for security violations six months ago. The hacker installed the application externally through the internet, not from a state computer, Bailey said. The state Department of Justice, FBI, and the United States Attorney's office are investigating.

Source: <http://www.cmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060216/REPOSITORY/602160371&template=printart>

14. *February 16, WGRZ2 News (NJ)* — **New York hospital warning about information theft.** Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, NY, is warning about 17,000 of its former patients that their personal information was on laptop computers stolen in an armed robbery in New Jersey. Hospital officials sent out letters which advise some patients who were admitted between 2001 through 2004 that data with their names, addresses, dates of birth, and social security numbers was on files in the laptops. But the letter also points out that the laptops and the data files have security passwords which would probably prevent access of the files. The robbery occurred at the New Jersey office of a national consulting firm which is doing business with Mount St. Mary's and other hospitals. The worker's wallet was stolen along with the laptops by a suspect who was already identified by police. There is a warrant for his arrest.

Source: http://www.wgrz.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=35452

15. *February 16, Sacramento Bee (CA)* — **Counterfeit check scheme hits second regional California firm.** Thermaguard Inc. of Rancho Cordova, CA, said it was hit in December and again on Wednesday, February 15 by thieves who misused its banking information to produce fake checks written on a Wells Fargo account, co-owner Beau Offner said. Offner said the first breach involved payroll checks, and the second case used checks with numbers tied to its

general ledgers. Each time, the company had to close its Wells Fargo account and get a new one. "We're fortunate that we found out about both of them before we lost money...It makes you think that this is a pretty big scam going on," Offner added. Thermaguard's troubles emerged after Crowley Properties of Rocklin said Wednesday that hundreds of fake checks bearing its name and banking information were mailed across the United States as part of a fraud targeting people who posted résumés on the Web. Brady Mills, resident agent in charge of the Secret Service's Sacramento field office, said "We're seeing a lot of counterfeit business checks floating around...It's become another form of identity theft. Except that instead of a person's information being stolen and misused, it's a company's private information that is now getting stolen and misused."

Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/content/breakingnews/story/14195451p-1.5021972c.html>

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Transportation and Border Security Sector

16. *February 20, KGMB9 (HI)* — **Aloha emerges from bankruptcy.** A little more than a year after filing for bankruptcy protection, Aloha Airlines is expected on Tuesday, February 21, to finally be in the clear. It has been a bumpy and expensive ride for Hawaii's local carrier. Thirteen months after filing for Chapter 11, Aloha Airlines expects to be free and clear as it emerges from bankruptcy protection. But the price has been high. When the company filed for Chapter 11 in December 2004, it was coming off four straight quarterly losses. Management struck a deal with a potential buyer, but needed to trim costs that required painful concessions from its union employees. And with a long, drawn-out legal process comes a heavy price. "If you look at the professional fees, that's \$18 million, and if you look at the credit card holdbacks and people who try to grab your money when you really need your money, credit card processes, etc., that was another \$13 million," said David Banmiller, president of Aloha Airlines. The airlines expects to receive more than \$79 million to help clear its massive debt and takes flight under new ownership.

Source: <http://kgmb9.com/kgmb/display.cfm?storyID=7271>

17. *February 17, Department of Transportation* — **United States, Cameroon sign Open-Skies aviation agreement.** The United States and Cameroon signed a full Open-Skies agreement that will permit the airlines of both countries to operate air services between the two countries without restriction. U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi E. Frazer and Cameroonian Minister of Transport Dakole Daissala signed the agreement on February 16 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Open-Skies agreements permit unrestricted air service by the airlines of both sides between and beyond the other's territory, without restrictions on how often the carriers can fly, the prices they charge, or the kind of aircraft they use. The accord with Cameroon also will allow all-cargo carriers to fly between the other country and third countries without directly connecting to their homeland. The United States now has Open-Skies relationships with 75 aviation partners, including 17 in sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot2606.htm>

18. *February 17, Rockford Register Star (IL)* — **Rockford airport could test new security plan.** At the nation's only active Registered Traveler program in Orlando, FL, fee-paying customers use personal biometric information to zip through airport security lines up to 28 minutes faster

than those travelers enduring the traditional security process. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) plans to unveil a similar system this summer for airports across the nation that would use biometric information, such as fingerprint scanning, to expedite the airport security process for prescreened travelers. The federal government also would look at a person's background to see whether he or she is a security threat. Chicago/Rockford International Airport could be one of the airports that participates in the program, called Registered Traveler. Chicago/Rockford is one of 40 U.S. airports that are part of a consortium aimed at making the system work universally at airports across the country. The group is working with the TSA to finalize rules and details for Registered Traveler, a project that started nearly two years ago when the federal government launched pilot programs at five major U.S. airports. Because of the success of the pilot programs, TSA has set June as the month that it will potentially launch the national program, according to Lara Uselding, a Chicago-based spokesperson for TSA.

Source: <http://www.rstar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060218/BUINESS02/102180013>

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Postal and Shipping Sector

19. *February 17, DMNews* — Postal Service outlines plans for new network. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is progressing on plans to phase out facilities that handle single products, such as bulk mail centers and international service centers, and create regional distribution centers focusing on shape-based processing. A USPS official revealed more details on Thursday, February 16, about the agency's review and realignment of its mail processing and transportation networks, expected to occur in phases starting within a year. The Evolutionary Network Development program aims to yield networks suited to current and future postal operational needs, reducing redundancy, making operations flexible, and cutting costs. Paul Vogel, USPS vice president of network operations, said that new mailing patterns demand these changes. For example, "single-piece First-Class mail is eroding. Over the past six or seven years, it's gone down almost 20 percent ... and that's where our labor intensity is in our system network — collecting and sorting and canceling all of that type of mail." "Our network is designed around product or mail class, and our technology is designed around shape," Vogel said. "So now we have to bring those two concepts [together.]" Similarly shaped mail items like packages may be processed on separate networks based on their class, such as standard mail parcels in one location and Priority Mail packages in another.

Source: http://www.dmnews.com/cgi-bin/artprevbot.cgi?article_id=35753

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Agriculture Sector

20. *February 20, USAgNet* — Foot-and-mouth disease found in Egypt. Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) has broken out in Egypt — the first reported case in the country since June 2000. A total of 15 cases of FMD were reported in the governorates of Alexandria, Behera, Cairo, Dakahlia, Dumyat, Fayum, Ismailia, and Menofia. Ahmed Tawfik Mohamed, chairman

of Egypt's General Organization for Veterinary Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, told the World Animal Health Organization that the total number of susceptible animals in the outbreaks was 12,438 cattle and buffaloes. In all there have been 7,356 cases and 411 deaths. The source of outbreak or origin of infection is under investigation. The control measures that have been put in place include quarantine of the infected areas, disinfection of infected premises, and control of animal movement from and to the infected areas. Veterinary authorities will also vaccinate animals in the infected areas.

FMD information: http://www.oie.int/eng/maladies/fiches/A_A010.HTM

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.cfm?Id=207&yr=2006>

21. *February 19, Ridgway Record (PA)* — **Officials file charges against Reynoldsville deer farm.** Pennsylvania Game Commission officials have filed more than 2,300 wildlife-related and criminal charges against Jeffrey Dean Spence, for operating an illegal white-tailed deer farm and hunting operation. On February 14, charges were filed in the office of District Justice Richard Beck of Brookville, PA, and a preliminary hearing has been scheduled for March 31. If convicted of all counts, Spence faces fines and penalties in excess of \$16 million. Spence was charged with 1,284 counts for allegedly selling or bartering, offering for sale or barter, conspiring to sell and barter and having in possession for sale or barter white-tailed deer or the edible parts of white-tailed deer. It also is alleged that Spence propagated these deer at an unpermitted facility. It is alleged that Spence unlawfully used a computer to sell or offer for sale the white-tailed deer being propagated at the unpermitted facility, resulting in 960 counts of unlawful use of a computer and other crimes. Lastly, it is alleged that Spence unlawfully obtained payment for selling white-tailed deer he was not lawfully permitted to sell and that he raised at an unlawful facility, resulting in 74 counts of theft by deception.

Source: <http://www.ridgwayrecord.com/articles/2006/02/19/news/new03.txt>

22. *February 19, Associated Press* — **Wasting disease kills 25 percent of elk.** Eleven of 43 elk kept in pens contaminated with chronic wasting disease (CWD) have died from the disease over the last four years, a 25 percent mortality rate, according to research by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department that is being used to help formulate a state management plan for dealing with the disease. Game and Fish captured female elk calves on the National Elk Refuge in February 2002 and sent them to the state's Sybille Wildlife Research and Conservation Education Center near Laramie. The elk have been housed in pens assumed to be contaminated with the infectious prion that transmits the fatal brain-wasting disease. The remaining 32 elk will be held throughout their lifetime to document causes of death. Results from the Game and Fish research will be used to predict how the disease could affect free-ranging elk populations. CWD attacks the central nervous system of deer and elk, causing the infected animals to waste away. It's fatal to the animals that contract it and there's no known cure. The prevalence of the disease in free-ranging elk in Wyoming has ranged from two percent to three percent.

CWD information: <http://www.cwd-info.org/>

Source: <http://www.casperstartribune.net/articles/2006/02/19/news/regional/3854c8486f54dbe787257118006089d4.txt>

23. *February 18, Sun News (Canada)* — **Deer cull resumes in Alberta.** Government hunters will shoot every wild deer they can find in the Chauvin area of Alberta, Canada, in an effort to curb the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). Four more cases of the disease turned up in the latest cull of 837 deer in the Empress and Acadia Valley area in late January, Alberta

Sustainable Resource Development announced Friday, February 17. That brings the total number of CWD cases in the province to eight since the first case was confirmed in September 2005. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development spokesperson Dave Ealey said large deer culls — killing most of the deer in high-risk areas — are virtually the only way to reduce the spread of the disease and track its presence in an area. The cull runs February 24 to March 4. CWD information: <http://www.cwd-info.org/>
Source: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/News/Alberta/2006/02/18/1449646-s un.html>

24. *February 17, Stop Soybean Rust News* — Ohio to maintain its 45 soybean rust sentinel plots.

Sentinel plots, established throughout the U.S. last year as the first line of defense against soybean rust, will again be a part of the plan to monitor the disease this growing season. Anne Dorrance, an Ohio State University plant pathologist with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, said that Ohio will maintain its 45 sentinel plots. "The sentinel plots worked, and they worked very well, and we got good participation from the counties. The Extension educators did an outstanding job scouting the sentinel plots," said Dorrance. "Because of the sentinel plots placed throughout the South, we will know a month ahead of time if we are going to be at risk from soybean rust during 2006." According the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), sentinel plots have been established in more than 30 states and Canada, stretching as far south as Florida, as far north as Ontario, as far east as Delaware and as far west as Washington. A total of 138 counties throughout the U.S. tested positive for soybean rust last year. So far this year the USDA has reported positive soybean rust finds on kudzu in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

Source: <http://www.stopsoybeanrust.com/viewStory.asp?StoryID=687>

25. *February 16, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service* — Plan to combat exotic fruit flies.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) released Thursday, February 16, a plan to further protect the health and value of American agricultural resources threatened by the introduction and establishment of exotic fruit fly pests. The Exotic Fruit Fly Strategic Plan is an integrated, multi-faceted approach that incorporates surveillance activities, control programs, and regulatory actions to safeguard American agriculture against a number of fruit fly species, including Mediterranean (Medfly), Mexican and Oriental fruit flies. To safeguard against a pest that attacks more than 400 host plants, APHIS is taking a global approach and will focus on achieving five priorities: Preventing individual fruit fly introductions from becoming established populations in the continental United States; Reducing the imminent threat of introductions or spread of Medfly and Mexican fruit fly populations in Mexico; Lessening the impact of Mexican fruit flies currently established in portions of Texas; Supporting the development of fruit fly detection and control programs in the Caribbean Basin and Central America to reduce the threat they present and Reducing the entry risk by providing technical support worldwide.

Source: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2006/02/pestplan. shtml>

26. *February 16, Phytosanitary Alert System* — Detection of soybean rust in Mexico. At the end of October 2005, soybean leaves of the variety "Huasteca 400" were collected at harvest. The leaves had symptoms and signs of low incidence soybean rust in Tamuin, state of San Luis Potosi, and in Altamira, state of Tamaulipas, both municipalities within the region called "huasteca." Samples collected were processed at the molecular mycology and biology laboratory of the National Phytosanitary Reference Center, with positive results for soybean

rust. The Mexican National Service for Agri–Food Health, Safety and Quality, through the Plant Health Directorate, has applied a plan to decrease damage and risk of spreading the soybean rust, through outreach activities aimed at monitoring, identifying and controlling the disease.

Source: <http://www.pestalert.org/oprDetail.cfm?oprID=192>

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Food Sector

- 27. February 18, Food Safety and Inspection Service — Pork barbeque recalled.** Griffin's Barbeque of Williamston, Inc., a Williamston, NC, firm, is voluntarily recalling approximately 30 pounds of pork barbeque that may be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced Saturday, February 18. The pork barbeque was produced on February 10 and was distributed to a local retail establishment in Williamston, NC. The problem was discovered through routine FSIS microbiological testing. FSIS has received no reports of illnesses associated with consumption of this product. Consumption of food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause listeriosis, an uncommon but potentially fatal disease.
Source: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_007_2006_release/index.asp
- 28. February 18, Food Safety and Inspection Service — Beef sausage recalled.** Hi–Country Snack Foods, a Lincoln, MT, firm, is voluntarily recalling approximately 219 pounds of beef products due to potential contamination with microbiological pathogens, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced Saturday, February 18. While the product label advises consumers to "refrigerate after opening," this product must be refrigerated at all times to prevent the growth of pathogens that could potentially cause illness. The jalapeño beef logs were produced on November 7, 2005, and sold at a retail establishment in Lincoln, MT. The problem was discovered through routine FSIS inspection activities. FSIS has received no reports of illnesses associated with consumption of this product.
Source: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_006_2006_release/index.asp
- 29. February 17, Agricultural Research Service — Progress made in reducing *Campylobacter* in poultry.** Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists have identified and investigated two “hot spots” in poultry production where contamination with *Campylobacter* bacteria may occur. Getting live poultry to processing plants involves confining the birds in transport coops for long periods. ARS microbiologist Mark Berrang and ARS food technologist Julie Northcutt have evaluated the role of transport coops and carcass defeathering as critical points at which *Campylobacter* contamination of broilers and broiler carcasses occurs. The research team found that feces from *Campylobacter*–positive birds can contaminate the feathers and skin of *Campylobacter*–negative birds later placed in the same soiled transport coop. The scientists plan to explore ways to redesign the coops to make them easier to clean. According to Berrang, washing coops with water and disinfectant can reduce the *Campylobacter* levels, but it isn't reliable and doesn't eliminate the microbes. The second critical contamination point occurs during an early step in processing—feather removal. While, overall, processing decreases *Campylobacter* numbers on carcasses, this step increases them. Berrang and Northcutt have shown that the *Campylobacter* increase is caused by the escape of highly contaminated fecal

matter from the birds' lower gut during feather removal. They are now investigating methods to minimize this source of contamination.

Source: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/News/docs.htm?docid=1261>

30. *February 17, U.S. Department of Agriculture* — **Results of investigation into ineligible veal shipment to Japan.** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Mike Johanns Friday, February 17, announced the results of an investigation into the ineligible shipment of veal that was sent to Japan last month. He also released a comprehensive USDA report that details the findings of the investigation and actions taken by USDA. The report, which totals 475 pages, establishes several facts surrounding the ineligible shipment, including noting that it posed no risk to human health. The report lays out the unique circumstances surrounding this shipment: it was the first shipment of veal sent to Japan; only two plants were certified to ship veal to Japan; and both of them were delisted before any other shipments were sent to Japan. In addition, veal had only recently been added to the U.S. export agreement with Japan. The document relayed to Japan contains two distinct reports: an investigation by the Food Safety and Inspection Service and an audit by the Office of the Inspector General. In total, it contains eleven findings: five resulting from the FSIS investigation and six from a separate Inspector General's audit, with the findings closely mirroring each other. The report concludes that mistakes were made by the plants involved with the shipment and by USDA inspection personnel.
Report: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Japan_Export_Investigation_Report.pdf
Source: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?contentonly=true&contentid=2006/02/0047.xml>

31. *February 17, U.S. Food and Drug Administration* — **Marshals seize food items from District of Columbia company.** At the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued a warrant on February 17, 2006, to seize various foods at Happy Valley Food, Inc., located in the District of Columbia. The seizure action was initiated by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and FDA after FDA found extensive evidence of rodent infestation, rodent-defiled food, overcrowded storage conditions, and harborage areas for various pests throughout the firm's warehouse facility during a recent inspection. The FDA inspection was conducted upon notification of insanitary conditions at the firm by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service and with the cooperation and assistance of the District of Columbia's Department of Health. The U.S. Marshals seized all FDA-regulated food susceptible to rodent and pest contamination. The seized products violate the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act because they were held under insanitary conditions. Happy Valley Food, Inc. warehouses food and paper items for the restaurant industry including rice, Japanese bread crumbs, flour, corn starch, dried mushrooms, soy sauce, duck sauce, dried beans, and spices.
Source: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/news/2006/NEW01320.html>

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Water Sector

32. *February 20, Associated Press* — **Chemical spill cuts water in China.** A chemical spill on a river in southern China has cut water supplies to 20,000 people for at least four days, the official China Daily newspaper said Monday, February 20. The paper said that a power plant on

the upper reaches of the Yuexi River in Sichuan province was to blame for the pollution, which prompted environmental officials to suspend water supplies to Guanyin Town since Wednesday, February 15. An employee with a local water supply company noticed the river water had turned yellow Tuesday, February 14. Tests showed it was polluted with high levels of fluoride, nitrogen, and phenol. The incident follows a spate of spills in recent months, the most serious being an explosion at chemical plant in November that dumped chemicals into the Songhua River, the source of drinking water for tens of millions of people living in northeastern China and Russia.

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/02/19/china.river.pollution.ap/>

33. *February 20, Associated Press* — Officials investigate missing water in Florida city.

Officials in Bronson, FL, are trying to figure out why 40 percent of the 5.7 million gallons of water pumped from city wells is missing. Town officials said they have discovered that one to two million gallons of water a month is being pumped from the town's wells, but is not being paid for.

Source: <http://www.local6.com/news/7253693/detail.html>

34. *February 18, Asbury Park Press (NJ)* — Water utility fined for non-disclosure. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has fined United Water Toms River \$64,000 for failing to inform the DEP and the public about seven instances of elevated radiation levels found during testing of the company's water system in 2005. United Water spokesperson Richard Henning said United has undertaken an internal investigation to learn why the Toms River office did not report the test results. The penalties are the maximum that could have been imposed for violations of the state's Safe Drinking Water Act. The act requires water companies to notify the DEP within 48 hours of learning about elevated radiation levels within their systems. It also requires companies to notify the public within 30 days of learning about elevated radiation levels. United officials first notified the DEP about the elevated radiation levels on January 30, 2006. Henning has said company officials in Toms River likely first learned of the elevated tests in late May or early June 2005. Public notification was mailed to United's customers February 14, 2006.

Source: <http://www.app.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060218/NEWS/602180352/1070/NEWS02>

35. *February 17, American Society for Microbiology* — Anthrax spores may survive water treatment. Anthrax spores may survive traditional drinking water disinfection methods and can attach themselves to the inside surface of water pipes. Researchers reported their findings Friday, February 17, at the 2006 American Society for Microbiology Biodefense Research Meeting. "The purpose of this study was to determine the fate of anthrax spores in a drinking water system that uses chlorine as a disinfectant," said Jon Calomiris, who conducted the study. Calomiris investigated the ability of anthrax spores to survive in water with a concentration of one milligram of chlorine per liter (typical tap water has a concentration of one to two milligrams per liter). After 60 minutes in the water, there was no significant decrease in the number of viable spores. "Under those same conditions, one minute exposure could kill 99.99 percent of other waterborne pathogens that do not exist as spores," says Calomiris. Higher concentrations of chlorine were much more effective. At 5mg/L (a concentration that might be used by treatment systems during periods when drinking water is turbid) 97 percent of spores were killed after one hour. At 10mg/L (similar to a highly chlorinated swimming pool) 99.99

percent were killed, but the chlorine concentration would be too high for the water to be drinkable.

Source: http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-02/asfm-asm02130_6.php

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Public Health Sector

36. *February 21, Agence France–Presse* — Malaysia confirms new bird flu outbreak. Malaysia has confirmed its first outbreak of the H5N1 strain of bird flu in more than a year, after 40 chickens died on a poultry farm north of the capital last week. Agriculture Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said Monday, February 20, that laboratory tests had "confirmed the death of the chickens was caused by H5N1 avian influenza." Muhyiddin said no humans had been affected, and that "immediate and integrated action" had been taken by national and city officials in Kuala Lumpur to keep the virus from spreading. Besides destroying the chickens on nearby farms, authorities put in place surveillance measures to ensure that no fowl were moved out of the affected area, he said. "Action to disinfect all chicken coops in the affected area was also carried out, while monitoring of the area and its residents was continuing," he said. Malaysia last announced an H5N1 outbreak in late 2004 in a village in northern Kelantan state. Ramli Rahmat, director of disease control, said that the health ministry had put in place an action plan to prevent the spread of the virus to humans. "We have imposed a surveillance on the villagers. We have to see to the people. We are ready."

Source: <http://www.todayonline.com/articles/102146.asp>

37. *February 20, CNN* — India bird flu cull continues. The mass culling of poultry continued Monday, February 20, in India's western state of Maharashtra, two days after three cases of the H5N1 strain of bird flu were found among chickens there. Officials plan to kill some 700,000 fowl within two miles of where the infected birds were found. Meanwhile, health officials are going door-to-door in the region, looking for any people who may be showing signs of the virus. So far, no human cases have been found, but several people with flu-like symptoms are under observation, authorities said. Indian health officials confirmed the bird flu outbreak among poultry in Nandurbar district Saturday, February 18, and authorities with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) — which tracks disease outbreaks among animals — confirmed the findings Monday, February 20. H.K. Pradhan, head of the animal disease laboratory in the city of Bhopal, announced the finding of the H5N1 strain and said the lab has been testing samples from tens of thousands of poultry that have died in the past couple of weeks. Health Secretary T.K. Hota said the flu is thought to have spread to farm birds from migratory birds. Maharashtra state has a large poultry industry.

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/conditions/02/20/birdflu.india/>

38. *February 20, Associated Press* — Scientists see growing animal–disease risk. Humans risk being overrun by diseases from the animal world, according to researchers who have documented 38 illnesses that have made that jump over the past 25 years. There are 1,407 pathogens — viruses, bacteria, parasites, protozoa, and fungi — that can infect humans, said Mark Woolhouse of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Of those, 58 percent come from animals. Scientists consider 177 of the pathogens to be "emerging" or "re-emerging." Most will never cause pandemics. Experts fear the H5N1 bird flu could prove an exception. Controlling

bird flu will require renewed focus on the animal world to stem the progress of the virus, experts said at a news conference Sunday, February 19, at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "The strategy has to be looking at how to contain it in the animal world, because once you get into the human side, you're dealing with vaccines and antiretrovirals, which is a whole new realm," said Nina Marano, with the National Center for Infectious Diseases. Each year for the last 25 years, one or two new pathogens and multiple variations of existing threats have infected humans for the first time.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/20/AR2006022000146.html>

39. February 20, Agence France–Presse — Europe struggles to halt spread of bird flu.

Germany was scrambling to prevent the potentially H5N1 strain of bird flu from spreading to poultry. France, Europe's top poultry producer, is on a high state of alert after becoming the sixth country in the European Union (EU) to confirm a case of H5N1 which can kill humans. In Germany, where the virus first broke out on the Baltic Sea island of Ruegen last week, outbreaks were confirmed at the weekend on the mainland of the northeast state of Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania. Agriculture Minister Horst Seehofer said 250 German soldiers would join army specialists already on Ruegen to pick up dead birds. Germany, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, and Slovenia have ordered poultry to be shut indoors. France's first case of H5N1 was confirmed on Saturday, February 18, when it was announced that a wild duck found dead near the city of Lyon had the virus. Apart from Germany and France, H5N1 has also been detected in Austria, Greece, Italy, and Slovenia. The virus has also been found in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. Spain has ordered tests on two wild birds on Monday, February 20.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060220/hl_afp/healthfluworld_0_60220141931

40. February 19, Agence France–Presse — Bird flu spreads across Egypt. Poultry have tested positive for the H5N1 virus in several governorates across Egypt despite the government's efforts to contain the spread of bird flu, the authorities said. Since the highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza was first detected in three governorates Thursday, February 16, it was also reported in at least six others. "In most cases, the infected animals came from domestic farms counting some 30 birds. They were not industrial farms," said an official from the supreme national committee to combat bird flu. He said that in one case however, an entire flock of 10,000 was slaughtered after one dead bird tested positive in the governorate of Qalubia, which is home to the country's poultry stock exchange. Most of the infected animals came from domestic farmyards, and Egypt has embarked on an awareness campaign in a bid to put an end to widespread rooftop and backyard poultry rearing. According to experts, animals in rooftop farmyards are more easily infected by migratory birds and are not subjected to veterinary control. The domestic setting also heightens the risk of transmission to humans.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060219/hl_afp/healthfluegypt_0_60219190031;_ylt=AvJsaAo.O5vowwLcKGpKJq.JOrgF:_ylu=X3oDMTA5aHJvMDdwBHNIYwN5bmNhdA--

41. February 17, Associated Press — Ebola vaccine passes first test. The first vaccine designed to prevent infection with the Ebola virus has passed initial safety tests in people and has shown promising signs that it may indeed protect people from contracting the disease, government scientists reported Friday, February 17. Just 21 people received the experimental vaccine in this

early stage testing. Much more research is necessary to prove whether the vaccine will pan out, cautioned lead researcher Gary Nabel of the National Institutes of Health. But the results are encouraging for U.S. scientists who worry not only that the virus might be used as a terrorist weapon, but also note that natural outbreaks in Africa seem to be on the rise. Nabel and colleagues developed a vaccine made of DNA strands that encode three Ebola proteins. They boosted that vaccine with a weakened cold-related virus, and the combination protected monkeys exposed to Ebola. The first human testing looked just at the vaccine's DNA portion. At a microbiology meeting on Friday, February 17, Nabel reported seeing no worrisome side effects when comparing six people given dummy shots with 21 volunteers given increasing doses of the DNA vaccine.

Ebola information: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/ebola.htm>

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory?id=1633300>

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Government Sector

42. *February 14, Center for Homeland Defense and Security* — **Homeland security library gets more searchable.** The Homeland Security Digital Library (HSDL) is the nation's premier collection of homeland security policy and strategy related documents. It supports local, state and federal analysis and decision-making needs and assists academics of all disciplines in homeland defense and security related research. It provides quick access to important U.S. policy documents, presidential directives, and national strategy documents as well as specialized resources such as theses and reports from various universities, organizations and local and state agencies. The resources are reviewed and selected by a team of homeland security researchers and organized in an unique homeland security taxonomy. Homeland security policy-makers at the federal, state and local levels also use HSDL to find strategy, policy and research documents. The library contains a large number of categories that include Law and Justice, Borders and Immigration, Infrastructure Protection, Terrorism and Society, Weapons and Weapons Systems, Emergency Management, and Public Health according to the statement. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Grants and Training sponsors the library, which started operating in September 2005.

HSDL Website: <http://www.hsdl.org/>

Source: <http://knxup2.hsdl.org/uPortal/render.userLayoutRootNode.uP>

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Emergency Services Sector

43. *February 16, Inside Indiana Business* — **Indiana Department of Homeland Security unveils new strategic plan.** The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) has unveiled a new strategic plan aimed at making sure the state is prepared for a man made or natural disaster. The new plan outlines eight strategic goals which include teamwork, planning and risk analysis, training and response. "The development of this plan is an important step towards achieving our vision of becoming a nationally recognized leader for an effective, comprehensive homeland security system," said IDHS Executive Director J. Eric Dietz. "The execution of the plan will

help ensure that Indiana is as prepared as possible for any future event that we may be confronted with.”

Original press release: <http://www.in.gov/dhs/press/2006/strategy.pdf>

Source: <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/newsitem.asp?id=16882>

44. *February 16, Access News* — Emergency officials plan for earthquake, oil spill scenario.

Emergency response officials from 13 states and numerous federal and local agencies are dreaming up their worst nightmares. Next week in Memphis, TN, they will start working out the logistics for a practice exercise to help bring those worries under control. A gathering of hundreds of officials will be held February 21–23 at the Memphis Marriott Downtown. It will be the first in a series of planning meetings culminating in a two-week disaster drill in June 2007 encompassing multiple locations and compounded emergencies. The disaster scenario will begin with a catastrophic earthquake in the Midwest and Mid-South's New Madrid Seismic Zone, followed by a hazardous materials spill in one of the Great Lakes. A series of additional complications stemming from the two events will challenge the skills and resources of thousands of emergency, public safety, transportation and public health officials. The emergency planning exercise, called Spill of National Significance, is held every three years.

Source: <http://www.accessnews.com/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=8173>

45. *February 16, Cambridge Chronicle (MA)* — Massachusetts officials introduce simulation prototype for emergency scenarios.

A group of government and education officials brought the avian flu into Massachusetts for a day during a comprehensive role-playing exercise on Saturday, February 4, in Cambridge. Cambridge College was the main sponsor of this role-play, called the BIRDFLUPLEX Simulation Exercise, which tests the preparedness and readiness of state and local governments for an avian influenza pandemic while exercising, testing and evaluating the continuity of operations and public health emergency plans on a macro and micro level. Among the participants in the simulation were government and local officials, administrators from Partners Healthcare, local university representatives and Cambridge College students. BIRDFLUPLEX focused on pandemic emergency response plans, communications and decisions. Simulation attendees assumed a wide range of roles, ranging from governor to taxicab driver to hospital CEO to grocery chain owner. The simulation is a prototype for a replicable education, training, planning and evaluation tool set. It can be used by government agencies, businesses, transportation centers and any other public or private institution. It can also be adapted, with minor modifications, to smallpox and other intentional or natural deadly epidemics.

Source: http://www2.townonline.com/cambridge/opinion/view.bg?article_id=431292

46. *February 16, Huntsville Times (AL)* — Severe Weather Awareness Week in Alabama and Tennessee.

The National Weather Service has planned a series of educational activities and drills as part of Severe Weather Awareness Week that began Sunday, February 19, in Alabama and Tennessee. The Alabama and Tennessee emergency management agencies will provide information through the news media on severe weather planning and safety. Activities this week will help people prevent injuries and deaths from tornadoes, damaging winds, flash floods, lightning and hail. Each day focuses on a specific type of severe weather or on the warning and drill system.

Source: <http://www.al.com/news/huntsvilletimes/index.ssf?/base/news/114008514550060.xml&coll=1>

47. *February 16, Seward Independent (NE)* — **Nebraska county conducts exercise in terror prevention.** Tuesday, February 7, Seward County, NE, Law Enforcement conducted a tabletop exercise. The scenario involved a pickup truck full of terrorists slamming into the barricade at the entrance to local courthouse. The purposes of exercise, designed by the sheriff's department, were to evaluate the effectiveness of response plans already in place by the county and foster closer relationships between partnering public safety agencies. "We hoped to point out deficiencies or good points about the procedures we have in place now," said Gary Petersen, Seward County emergency manager. "We came away with some good ideas and things we had never thought about." The exercise consisted of a series of read scenarios and follow-up questions regarding what the emergency response would be based on current county protocol and expected behavior.
Source: <http://www.sewardindependent.com/c10653.html>

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Information Technology and Telecommunications Sector

48. *February 17, IDG News Service* — **Sony rootkit may lead to regulation; DHS worried about potential vulnerabilities.** A U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official warned Thursday, February 17, that if software distributors continue to sell products with dangerous rootkit software, as Sony BMG Music Entertainment recently did, legislation or regulation could follow. "We need to think about how that situation could have been avoided in the first place," said Jonathan Frenkel, director of law enforcement policy with the DHS Border and Transportation Security Directorate, who was speaking at the RSA Conference 2006 in San Jose, CA. Last year, Sony began distributing XCP software in some of its products. This digital rights management software, which used rootkit cloaking techniques normally employed by hackers, was later found to be a security risk, and Sony was forced to recall millions of its CDs. While Sony's software was distributed without malicious intent, DHS is worried that a similar situation could occur again, this time with more serious consequences. "It's a potential vulnerability that's of strong concern to the department," Frenkel said. Though DHS has no ability to implement the kind of regulation that Frenkel mentioned, the organization is attempting to increase industry awareness of the rootkit problem.
Source: http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/02/17/75492_HNrootkitregulation_1.html
49. *February 17, Hackers Center Security Portal* — **Opera image control status bar spoofing weakness.** A weakness has been reported in Opera, which can be exploited by malicious people to trick users into visiting a malicious website by obfuscating URLs displayed in the status bar. The problem is that the browser fails to show the correct URL in the status bar if an image control with a "title" attribute has been enclosed in a hyperlink and uses a form to specify the destination URL. This may cause a user to follow a link to a seemingly trusted website when in fact the browser opens a malicious website. Users should update to version 8.52.
Source: <http://www.hackerscenter.com/archive/view.asp?id=22870>
50. *February 16, Secunia* — **Mac OS X Kernel local denial-of-service vulnerability.** A vulnerability has been reported in Mac OS X, which can be exploited by malicious, local users to cause a denial-of-service. Analysis: The vulnerability is caused due to an unspecified error

in an undocumented system call and can be exploited to crash the system. Solution: Update to version 10.4.5.

Mac OS X Server 10.4.5: <http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosxserver1045.html>

Mac OS X Update 10.4.5 Combo:

<http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosxupdate1045combo.html>

Mac OS X Update 10.4.5: <http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosxupdate1045.html>

Mac OS X Update 10.4.5 for Intel:

<http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosxupdate1045forintel.html>

Source: <http://secunia.com/advisories/18907/>

- 51. February 16, Network World — Study: Telecom is over the hump.** The telecom slump may finally be over — not only are users spending more on telecommunications services, but a new report released last week shows strong growth in network equipment, wireless devices, wireless services, Internet access, unified communications and conferencing. The Telecommunications Industry Association's (TIA) 2006 Telecommunications Market Review and Forecast provides the group's annual assessment of the industry and shows the U.S. telecommunications business overall grew 8.9 percent in 2005 to \$856.9 billion. The report goes on to say that the U.S. telecom business will see double-digit growth in 2006 reaching \$944.7 billion and by 2007 it will reach \$1.2 trillion. TIA says companies moving to converged technologies, the consolidation of the service provider market and rampant wireless usage all are fueling telecom growth.

TIA press release: http://www.tiaonline.org/business/media/press_releases/2006/PR06-14.cfm

The TIA report is available for purchase:

<http://www.tiaonline.org/business/research/mrf/index.cfm>

Source: <http://www.networkworld.com/news/2006/021606-telecom.html>

Internet Alert Dashboard

DHS/US-CERT Watch Synopsis

Over the preceding 24 hours, there has been no cyber activity which constitutes an unusual and significant threat to Homeland Security, National Security, the Internet, or the Nation's critical infrastructures.

US-CERT Operations Center Synopsis: US-CERT is aware of publicly available exploit code for a buffer overflow vulnerability in Windows Media Player. The vulnerability exists because Windows Media Player fails to properly validate bitmap image files. Exploitation may occur if a user takes any of the following actions:

- Opens a specially crafted bitmap image file (.bmp) using Windows Media Player
- Opens a Windows Media Metafile, such as an ASX file, that references a bitmap image file (.bmp)
- Visits a specially crafted web page
- Successful exploitation may allow a remote, unauthenticated attacker to execute arbitrary code with the privileges of the user

More information can be found in the following US-CERT Vulnerability Note:

VU#291396 Microsoft Windows Media Player vulnerable to buffer overflow in bitmap processing routine: <http://www.kb.cert.org/vuls/id/291396>

US-CERT urges users and administrators to apply the appropriate workarounds and updates as instructed in the Microsoft Security Bulletin MS06-005 to mitigate this vulnerability: <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/Bulletin/MS06-005.msp>

US-CERT is aware of Multiple Exploits available on the Internet for MS06-005 and MS06-006. In the last 72 hours a total of four exploits have been released – two each for MS06-005 and MS06-006:

MS06-005 – Vulnerability in Windows Media Player Could Allow Remote Code Execution: <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS06-005.msp>

MS06-006 – Vulnerability in Windows Media Player Plug-in with Non-Microsoft Internet Browsers Could Allow Remote Code Execution:
<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS06-006.msp>

Current Port Attacks

Top 10 Target Ports	1026 (win-rpc), 6881 (bittorrent), 43091 (----), 25 (smtp), 445 (microsoft-ds), 7023 (----), 41170 (----), 54000 (----), 139 (netbios-ssn), 32774 (sometimes-rpc11) Source: http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html ; Internet Storm Center
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To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: www.us-cert.gov.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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Commercial Facilities/Real Estate, Monument & Icons Sector

52. February 20, CNN — New attempt differs from 10 church arsons. An attempted arson at an east Alabama church on Sunday, February 19, bears little similarity to 10 other intentionally set church fires in the state, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) said. It appeared something was thrown Sunday morning at a Church of God in an effort to set it alight, said the ATF's Jim Cavanaugh. The church is in a remote location near the Etowah County community of Glencoe. The effort failed, and resulted in minimal damage to the church's exterior. The other 10 arsons and attempted arsons have all been in the central or western parts of the state. In addition, Cavanaugh said there were no signs of forced entry into the Glencoe church — a departure from the other arsons. The ATF is also investigating a fire Friday night at a Methodist church on the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa, in western Alabama, Cavanaugh said, but it has not yet been determined whether it was accidental. In addition, the ATF is investigating a warehouse fire in Tuscaloosa on Friday night that apparently housed merchandise for a Christian business. The blaze is considered arson, Cavanaugh said.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/02/19/church.fires/index.html>

53. February 18, Associated Press — Experts: Intense development raises flood risk around U.S. Intensified development in flood-prone parts of Missouri and California significantly raise the risk of New Orleans-style flooding in urban areas on the Mississippi and Sacramento rivers, researchers said Saturday, February 18. Around St. Louis, more than 14,000 acres of flood plain have been developed since 1993. That has reduced the region's ability to store water during future floods, said Adolphus Busch IV, chairman of the Great Rivers Habitat Alliance. Efforts to protect St. Louis from floods may have increased the risk, said Nicholas Pinter, a professor at Southern Illinois University. Pinter said as much as 85 percent of the Mississippi River in St. Louis is confined behind levees, which have raised flood levels up to 12 feet higher than they were just a century ago. That parallels the situation in New Orleans, which suffered catastrophic flooding when levees failed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina last summer. In California, development in the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta, where flood control efforts have continued since the mid-1800s, also represents a significant risk, said Jeffrey Mount of the University of California, Davis. Details about the research were being presented Saturday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-02-18-flood-risks_x.htm

54. February 17, CNN — FBI investigates Michigan mosque attacks. FBI officials are working with local law enforcement agencies to investigate attacks on a Muslim mosque in Hamtramck, MI. An incident Sunday, February 12, is the most recent in a spate of assaults on Islamic individuals and places of worship in the Detroit area. A group of boys around the age of 15 threw shoes at mosque members while they were praying, said Abdul Motlib, president of the Al-Islah Islamic Center. Teenage boys, sometimes in groups of five or six, have been harassing members of the large mosque daily in recent weeks, including several muggings in the past two weeks, Motlib said. Boys have thrown rocks at the mosque's windows, and in one instance, struck the mosque's imam, Muhammad Uddin, with a plastic snow shovel, Motlib added. He said that he contacted the FBI Wednesday, February 15, after finding local police efforts were not enough. The Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations has called for an increased police presence in the area around the mosque.
Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/02/16/mosque.attacks/index.html>

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General Sector

Nothing to report.

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